

APPROVED: Meeting No. 36-94

ATTEST: *Paula D. Jewell*

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Meeting No. 32-94

November 7, 1994

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in Worksession in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, on November 7, 1994, at 7:35 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor James F. Coyle

Councilmember Robert E. Dorsey

Councilmember Rose G. Krasnow

Councilmember James T. Marrinan

Councilmember Nina A. Weisbroth

In attendance: City Manager Bruce Romer, City Clerk Paula Jewell, and Assistant City Manager Rick Kuckkahn. Also in attendance were, City Traffic Engineer, Joe Cutro.

Re: Worksession with Traffic and
Transportation Commission

The Mayor and Council met with Chairperson Stan Klein, Commissioners Dennis Cain, Ann Reed Gaines, Alan Levine, William Meyer, Herbert Pennock, and Richard Resnick to discuss the following:

1. School Speed Limit Beacons - The Commission found that school beacons were an acceptable form of traffic control in many jurisdictions and may be of some benefit in the City. They recommended that starting in 1996, the City begin installing beacons.

Staff pointed out that while the beacons may be of some benefit, the long-term effectiveness of beacons was questionable. In addition, there were substantial costs associated with the installation of beacons.

Councilmember Weisbroth noted that the report did not address whether there was a City-wide need for beacons. Councilmember Dorsey questioned whether the operating costs for the beacons included maintenance. Councilmember Marrinan questioned what the statistics were on what has and has not been successful nationally. Mayor Coyle suggested that a combination of beacons with an educational program and enforcement was needed.

Mr. Kuckkahn pointed out that beacons tended to increase driver awareness and sensitivity that one is in a school area; however, he said that studies have shown that they don't actually slow drivers down. Mr. Cutro explained that Montgomery County installed beacons based on a priority need, and while evidence suggested there was some long-term effect on the number of accidents, the greater effect was on driver awareness. Responding to Mr. Dorsey's question on maintenance, Mr. Cutro said that the operating costs included maintenance and the beacon bulbs had a life span of 18 months to 2 years.

Councilmember Krasnow said that she could not foresee the program starting in Fiscal Year 1996; however, she said there were concerns that needed to be addressed with the reopening of Julius West Middle School and the increased traffic on Great Falls Road and Maryland Avenue. Mayor Coyle suggested that the matter be taken under advisement for the CIP budget; he asked that staff obtain answers to the issues raised and put together a priority

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list of school areas to determine whether the high priority areas could be accommodated as funds became available.

2. Speed Humps - The Commission was asked to give this issue further study.

Mr. Romer pointed out that since Scott Drive and Veirs Drive had been monitored for speed humps, the residents will be informed that the concept of speed humps is under study by the Mayor and Council. Mr. Klein asked the Mayor and Council to think about other areas for speed hump study.

3. Budget Issues

- Sidewalk Links - The Commission requested that sidewalk links be put back into the City's budget. Mr. Romer noted that there was always a need for these and the City was using previously authorized monies to install them. Mr. Cutro pointed out that the sidewalk links program for future years was not shown in the CIP. Mayor Coyle suggested that the Mayor and Council may need to revisit the links for Beall Avenue.
- Bikepath System - The Commission pointed out that the systems were in the Master Plan and should be recognized in the CIP budget, as the paths provided a means for commuting and recreation, and they enhanced community policing. Consensus reached to review this issue again.
- o Smoothseal Program - The Commission asked that the smoothseal and concrete maintenance program become a regular budgeted item. Councilmember

Krasnow pointed out that the City had adopted a policy for smoothseal and concrete maintenance; both were regularly done as a standard procedure. Mr. Romer informed the Commission that due to a recalcitrant contractor and a breakdown in management, the 1994 smoothseal work would not take place until 1995.

4. Proposed Pedestrian Policies - The Mayor and Council discussed the proposed policy and the addenda provided by Commissioner Ann Reed Gaines. The following points were discussed by the Mayor and Council and other actions were noted as follows:

- Regarding pedestrian crossing signals, red traffic lights in all directions should be considered in downtown and at other critical intersections.
- Regarding sidewalk reconstruction, repair, and maintenance, a question was raised about the City's liability and whether the City should have to provide sidewalk snow removal where the adjacent property was residential and there were no sidewalk buffers. Builders should be required to build the sidewalks parallel and not adjacent to the road.
- Regarding snow removal, consensus reached that the City will immediately endorse an aggressive citation policy with strong enforcement. Suggestion made to involve the Chamber of Commerce in getting this message to its members. The Commission may want to set up a meeting with the Chamber

in order to present Commissioner Cain's photo slides of the problems created when snow is not removed.

- Regarding pedestrian networks at a level above street grade, Councilmember Krasnow suggested the following language to substitute what appears in the proposed policy:

In areas of the Town Center where safety or capacity are matters of significant concern, a pedestrian network at a level above street grade should be considered. This network, which would primarily serve Metro, should augment and complement a safe and convenient pedestrian network at street level.

- Alternate wording was suggested in place of the words "shall" and "should", since the policy does not mandate conditions for individual policies. Suggested alternate language included "...will support this or ... explore this...", or general statements, e.g., that the policy for sidewalk construction "... will include the exploration of the broadest range of funding sources."
- Regarding the illumination of sidewalks, staff was asked to review those locations in the City where this should be done. Regarding illuminating non-sidewalk pedestrian facilities (parks, walkways, etc.), the Mayor and Council agreed that these sites needed to be carefully identified because of concerns that some residents may not want the light intrusions and some areas might attract undesirable who might use such lighted areas for sleeping. Concern was also raised about the potential liability to the City if they were not to

provide a light at a certain location and an incident occurred.

- The Commission and staff were asked to watch the use of the word "all" when identifying certain components, e.g., all sidewalks, all crosswalks, etc.
- No need to include other sight distance obstructions on sidewalks, e.g., boats and RVs, construction dumpsters; these are already regulated through the City's laws.
- Commissioner Cain requested that pedestrians be formally referred to as "walkers."

The Commission and staff will clean up the proposed policy based on the discussions. The Mayor and Council asked that the policy then be shared with the City's civic associations to get their input. The Mayor and Council should review the policy a second time, prior to it being presented at a public hearing. The policy will be formally adopted by a resolution of the Mayor and Council.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, the Worksession was adjourned at 9:55 p.m., to reconvene in General Session on November 14, 1994 or at the call of the Mayor.